



Fall 2025

THE ILLINOIS PRAIRIE PATH NEWSLETTER

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Mark the Date for the IPPC Annual Meeting

SAVE THE DATE



The Illinois Prairie Path is pleased to announce its annual meeting, once again, at the iconic Mary Lubko Center in Wheaton. Originally built as a coach house in 1888, this beautiful facility features wood paneled rooms, stone fireplaces, and great views. This year's program will feature the following: Presentation from Ride Illinois, updates from DuPage County, and much more.



Long-Time IPPC Board Member Moves On

Rob Sperl, who served on the Illinois Prairie Path (IPPC) Board for the past 24+ years, is relocating to Champaign. Rob, the former Director of Parks & Planning for the Wheaton Park District, will be assuming the position of Director of IDOT Projects at the Prairie Research Institute at the University of Illinois.

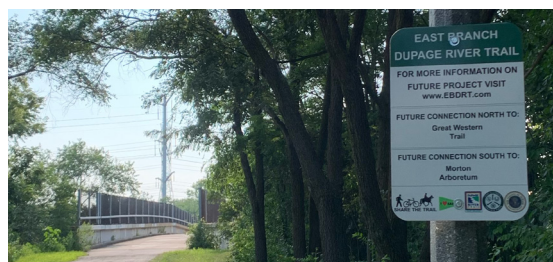
For the past decade, Rob has been our IPPC organization's Treasurer. Rob's has brought an articulate, thoughtful, and competent steady presence to this board for these many years. His rich knowledge of municipal governments and his extensive path history, having worked with the Moorings "way back in the day", surely established his role as one of the path "elders" in spite of his youth.

Rob, all the best to you in your new University of Illinois endeavors. We will miss you, really.



East Branch DuPage River Trail News

DuPage County recently posted informational signs touting the coming East Branch DuPage River Trail, long planned to cross the Illinois Prairie Path at the intersection area near the DuPage River. The EBDRT when constructed will allow hikers and bicyclists to travel north/south reaching destinations such as the Great Western Trail to the north and the Morton Arboretum to the south. More information is available at ebdrt.com.



E-Bikes – Ride Illinois

If there is one topic we hear most about from our members, it is the use of e-bikes and other electric devices on our beloved trail. While there are many strong opinions for and against, what is largely agreed upon is that there must be some reasonable restrictions as to what can be allowed on the IPP and with what guidelines.

As such, the IPPc has requested that the Executive Director of Ride Illinois, Dave Simmons, present the latest developments on e-bike use in Illinois and the current situation regarding reasonable use. For those that may not be aware, Ride Illinois is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization focused on bicycle advocacy, education, and awareness. Their efforts, programs, and events aim to make riding a bicycle in Illinois safer, more enjoyable, and accessible to all.

Dave has spent considerable time meeting with the state of Illinois, local municipalities, and many others and what has been learned. What has emerged is a better understanding of appropriate engagement and interactions for all Illinois trail/road users. Please join us on Sunday, November 2nd to learn more and voice your opinions on this very important and topic!



Thank You Benjamin and Ryan

To kick off the heart of summer biking and running season, Benjamin and Ryan, grandsons of IPPc Board member, Dennis Terdy, spent several hours cleaning up Mile Marker 0 Trailhead in west Wheaton. These few before and after photos reflect the dramatic results. Thank you, guys, for cleaning up this Trailhead and making it presentable as hundreds of path goers pass through this site over the summer and early fall.



Founders Park - MM 0 reflecting the results



Benjamin doing a bit of trimming.



Ryan finishing up weeding.



Finished

Proposed Illinois Prairie Path Extension

The proposed Illinois Prairie Path extension from the Maywood Trail Head to the CTA Des Plaines Ave. Blue Line Station is currently under study by Cook County. The Design and Engineering phase is expected to be completed after the first of the year in 2026. Although details of the plans have not been released it is expected to include a newly designed intersection at First Ave. including pedestrian crosswalks, removal of the slip lane along First Ave and a dedicated side path along the north side of Maybrook Drive.

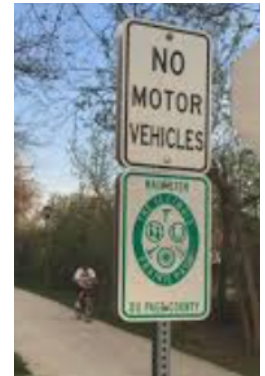
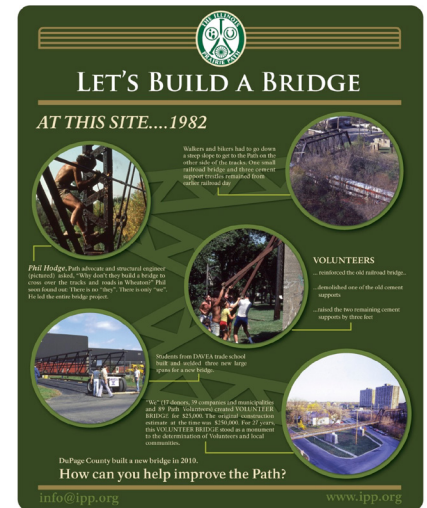
The plan under study does not match our original proposal. However, it will accomplish our goal of extending the IPP across the Des Plaines River and connecting it to the existing bike path which will connect the IPP to the CTA Des Plaines Ave. Blue Line Station's parking lot. When the design phase is complete, we have been told that we will be able to review the plan and provide input. The extension is expected to be completed in the next three to five years. Please stay tuned.

Revisiting Prairie Path Signs



The IPPc recently conducted a “Sign Survey” for Cook County segments of the Illinois Prairie Path. The purpose of the survey was to provide an inventory of existing signage along/around the IPP and work with local Cook County municipalities on recommendations to install new signage and/or replace existing signage. The ultimate goal is to enhance the experience of all IPP users, by providing

signage that improves multiple aspects of the path, including safety, wayfinding, trail etiquette, and more. Initially, the IPPc will work with Hancock Engineering and the Village of Maywood with plans to work with Bellwood, Hillside, and Berkeley as the sign project progresses. We are very pleased with the spirit of collaboration among all parties as we work together to improve the IPP experience.



Historic McKee House - DuPage Forest Preserve

One of the great things about the Illinois Prairie Path is how it connects communities. This will be enhanced by the construction of the East Branch DuPage River Trail now being planned. The EBDRT will connect the IPP to Churchill Woods Forest Preserve. Equally exciting is the prospect of the historic McKee House at Churchill Woods Forest Preserve becoming a Native American Cultural and Environmental Center. The Midwest SOARRING Foundation, a Chicago-based intertribal Native American nonprofit, and the McKee Preservation Group, seek to adapt and reuse the house into a community gathering space, exhibit hall, and history center. Imagine a place where we are enriched by Native American culture and views on protecting our environment. All of this is located near the former site of a Potawatomie village. Note also, the house sits near the future route of the EBDRT, and promises to be a fabulous stop for trail users.

Fundraising efforts are underway. A \$300,000 grant has been secured from the State of Illinois. Other government and private funds are needed to make this vision a reality. See <https://fundthecenter.org/> for details.





Jim H's family donated a memorial bench on the Aurora branch in Wheaton. "It's perfect".

New Benches on the Prairie Path – Take a Seat!

The 2025 benches have been installed. Donors and path users are thrilled!! These thoughtful additions make the path more accessible and inviting – perfect spots to rest, take in nature, or simply enjoy fresh air. Thank you to the donors, DuPage County and the IPPc!



Donna M's family donated a memorial bench on the Elgin branch in Wheaton. "I am so happy about this!"



Attila W's family donated a memorial bench on the Great Western trail in West Chicago. "Success! Great bench and place! Better than envisioned."



Monarch Landing donated a bench on the Aurora branch in Warrenville. "It looks great!" The Monarch Landing walking group appreciates it!



Everton Flats also donated a bench on the Aurora branch in Warrenville. Locals love it.

"From Rails to Trails" Documentary to Air October 15

The documentary, From Rails to Trails, which is narrated by Edward Norton, will be premiering on public television stations nationwide starting mid Fall. Note that the IPPc provided input into the development of this documentary. Click below for additional information.

<https://youtu.be/8ut6iH63-tQ?si=fJOUj-zTPqlpUf1G>

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1IH68k2NGjOXRWUQpfITlgOvB5A6TXQ3s/view?usp=drive_link



Follow us:

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Facebook: www.facebook.com/railstrails

It will be aired on local public television stations on October 15.

June | July

Thank you

Your membership and donations are used to provide services and fund improvements benefiting Illinois Prairie Path members and users.

Donations

Randall M.

Marilyn S.

New Members

Daniel A.

Rich B.

Glen C.

Lori G.

Beverly J.

Amy L.

Narayanan M.

Brian M.

Marilyn P.

Joseph P.

Andrew P.

Kristina R.

Daniel V.

